

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 MCT-01

BIB-01 EB-08 OES-07 HA-05 SY-05 COME-00 DOTE-00

DOE-11 SOE-02 /144 W

-----104510 010509Z /17

R 311922Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3304

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 01147

E.O. 11652 XGDS-SS-1

TAGS: PEPR, SP, XI

SUBJECT: SPANISH ACTIVITIES IN NORTH AFRICA

REF: MADRID 902

1. SUMMARY: CANARIES INDEPENDENTIST CUBILLOS'S ALGIERS-BASED BROADCASTS HAVE BEEN STOPPED SINCE JANUARY 25, THREE DAYS BEFORE THE TRIP TO ALGIERS OF SPANISH SOCIALIST LEADER FELIPE GONZALEZ. WHILE SOME PRESS COVERAGE HAS ASSERTED A LINK BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS, GONZALEZ HAS WISELY DOWNPLAYED THE IDEA IN HIS COMMENTS TO REPORTERS. THE GOS STILL HAS NO RESPONSE TO ITS PROTEST TO ALGERIA. NO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT HAS YET EMERGED REGARDING THE JANUARY 27-29 VISIT HERE OF MOROCCAN KING HASSAN. SPANISH OFFICIALS HAVE PRIVATELY TAKEN A POSITIVE BUT VAGUE LINE
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REGARDING THE SPECIAL TRIP TO LIBYA OF THE KING'S FATHER, DON JUAN. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MADRID PRESS HAS REPORTED, AND A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED TO US, THAT CANARIES INDEPENDENTIST (MPAIAC) ANTONIO CUBILLO HAS BEEN OFF THE AIR SINCE JANUARY 25; IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CENTRIST DAILY

INFORMACIONES, CUBILLO NOTED THAT ALGERIA HAD THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO DO AS IT WISHED WITH ITS COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA AND VOWED THAT MPAIAC'S "ARMED STRUGGLE" WOULD CONTINUE: "IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING THE TERRORISM IN MADRID, BLOOD WILL RUN", CUBILLO WAS QUOTED AS SAYING. A BASQUE NEWSPAPER REPORTED HE SAID MPAIAC WOULD DIRECT ITS ACTIONS AGAINST THE SPANISH ARMY.

3. THE BATTLE FOR THE CREDIT FOR STOPPING CUBILLO'S BROADCASTS HAS ALREADY BEEN JOINED IN THE PRESS HERE, WITH ASSERTIONS OF SKILLFUL PSOE DIPLOMACY DRAWING COUNTER-CLAIMS OF EFFECTIVE GOS EFFORTS. JUDGING BY THE QUOTES AVAILABLE HERE OF PSOE LEADER FELIPE GONZALEZ, HOWEVER, HE HAS ATTEMPTED TO DOWNPLAY THE CUBILLO-CANARIES ISSUE, SUGGESTING THAT CONCLUSIONS MIGHT BE PREMATURE.

4. BOUMEDIENE COUNSELOR SLIMANE HOFFMAN WAS ALSO QUOTED BY THE LEFT-LIBERAL MADRID DAILY EL PAIS AS TAKING AN EVASIVE LINE, DENYING ANY KNOWLEDGE THAT THE GOA HAS DISPUTED THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE CANARIES, AND SUGGESTING THAT IF THE CUBILLO BROADCASTS ARE NOT HEARD, THEN THEY HAVE BEEN STOPPED--OR "MAYBE THE TRANSMITTER IS BROKEN".

5. IN CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, THE
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FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CHIEF FOR NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (CAJAL) EXPRESSED IRRITATION BOTH AT THE "SPECTACLE" OF THE OVERBLOWN PRESS COVERAGE AND AT HOFFMAN'S JOCULAR REMARKS. WHILE CUBILLO IS NOW OFF THE AIR, HE NOTED, HE COULD RETURN ANY TIME, AND MEANWHILE THERE HAS STILL BEEN NO FORMAL ALGERIAN RESPONSE TO THE SPANISH PROTEST.

6. REGARDING THE HIJACKING OF THE SPANISH FREIGHTER BY TWO CANARIANS (ALGIERS 307 NOTAL) CAJAL SAID THEIR INFORMATION WAS THAT THE TWO HIGHJACKERS (ONE OF THEM A STOWAWAY) HAD FORCED THE SHIP TO ORAN, WHERE ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES HAD LOCKED THEM INTO A SHIP'S CABIN AND TOLD THE SHIP TO GO TO SPAIN. THE TWO HAD THEN MANAGED TO JUMP OVERBOARD AND MAKE THEIR WAY TO SHORE IN ALGERIA, WHERE THEY WERE PRESUMABLY, SAID CAJAL, EITHER IN JAIL OR UNDER SOME KIND OF OFFICIAL CONTROL. THE GOS HAD ASKED THE GOA FOR A REPORT ON THE INCIDENT, BUT SO FAR HAD NO RESPONSE.

7. MEANWHILE, NEITHER THE LOCAL PRESS NOR CAJAL HAD ANYTHING OF INTEREST TO OFFER CONCERNING MOROCCAN KING HASSAN'S QUICK (JANUARY 27-29) VISIT TO MADRID

(RABAT 572). PRIOR TO THE VISIT, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAD ACKNOWLEDGED TO US THAT HASSAN WOULD SURELY SEEK TO USE THE TRIP TO STRENGTHEN THE MOROCCAN POSITION IN SPAIN, BUT THEY EXPECTED THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN THE GOS STANCE.

8. THE TRIP OF THE KING'S FATHER TO LIBYA (MADRID 856) APPEARED TO HAVE GONE WELL, MINISTRY OFFICIALS INFORMED US. ONE SAID QADHAFI HAD BEEN "RECEPTIVE" TO DON JUAN. ALL COINCIDED IN THE IDEA THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIP HAD NOT BEEN TO TRY TO PIN DOWN THE MERCURIAL QADHAFI, BUT RATHER TO ENSURE THAT HE HAD A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPANISH POSITION. STABLER

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